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## Viewing cable 08BUENOSAIRES519, PRESIDENT CRISTINA KIRCHNER ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

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**#08BUENOSAIRES519.**

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">08BUENOSAIRES519</a>	<a href="#">2008-04-22 16:04</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Buenos Aires</a>

Appears in these articles:  
<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1356989-la-presidenta-queria-una-relacion-mas-estrecha-con-estados-unidos>

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0840  
INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1787  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1735  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR PORT AU PRINCE 0148  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000519

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/15/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [EPET](#) [KPAO](#) [KCOR](#) [MARR](#) [VZ](#)  
AR, CO, HA, BL  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CRISTINA KIRCHNER ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

## AND REGIONAL ISSUES

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons  
1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. In a very friendly April 10 meeting, Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (CFK) indicated great pleasure at the warm reception which President Bush had given Argentina's new Ambassador and expressed support for the vision of U.S. policy in the region described by A/S Shannon. CFK said she was deeply moved by the situation in Haiti. She agreed that the Organization of American States (OAS) could play a very useful role in helping to avoid crisis in Bolivia. Regarding Colombia, she argued persistently that the USG should support an effort to secure the humanitarian release of hostage Ingrid Betancourt. A/S Shannon explained U.S. efforts to find some areas in which to work with Venezuela but without success. CFK said she would raise this with Chavez as she supported efforts to lower tensions. Finally, CFK expressed her support for dialogue with U.S. companies with the goal of bringing more investment to Argentina. End summary.

¶2. (C) Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (CFK) met with A/S Thomas Shannon on the afternoon of April 10 for about 90 minutes. Chief Cabinet Minister Alberto Fernandez (AF), Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana, Ambassador to Washington Hector Timerman and Ambassador Wayne were present. After welcoming remarks, Ambassador Timerman described in glowing terms the presentation of his credentials to President Bush on April 9. Timerman expressed great pleasure with the warm reception that he had received, and CFK said she was very happy with President Bush's warmth and that Timerman was now fully empowered to carry out his mission in Washington.

### Relations with Latin America and Argentina

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¶3. (C) A/S Shannon explained the work done and ongoing by the Bush administration to assure that the new U.S. President has a good set of relations in place with Latin America in January 2009, and that the USG and countries in the region are working well in partnership to find solutions to important problems. He noted the U.S. priority on ensuring that the region is at peace, that democracy is flourishing, and that economic growth continues and proceeds in ways that include the poorest sectors of society. This is not an anti-Chavez or anti-Cuba agenda, but a pro-democracy, pro-growth, and pro-social justice agenda built on good dialogue and partnership. CFK said she fully supports such a vision and especially the focus on showing that democracy can bring jobs and a better life to the poorest members of society. The message of caring for the needs of all the people is right on the mark. She said we need mechanisms that can avoid conflict, strengthen democracy, and provide civilized ways of solving problems. She noted her belief that the dollar would strengthen again and the U.S. economy would recover, allowing the U.S. to play a strong role in the economic development of the region. In passing, she said that French president Sarkozy had been very concerned about the over-valued Euro when she met him earlier in the week.

¶4. (C) A/S Shannon said that during his visit, he and Foreign Minister Taiana would announce April 11 the revival of a dormant mechanism for high-level dialogue that which would bring structure and continuity to our bilateral relations. The State Department and the MFA would coordinate the dialogue, but many other ministries would be involved as we would cover issues from science and technology cooperation to Argentina's peacekeeping role. CFK expressed her support for this

endeavor.

Haiti

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15. (C) Focusing on the peacekeeping theme, CFK recounted her stark impressions from her recent visit to Haiti. She said she had never seen such a situation with no productive investment, horrible living conditions, and thousands of people just doing nothing. She said she understood unemployment to be about 60%. It is clear that the Argentine mission has important work to do, but clearly Haiti needs investment and aid, she said. Repeating that she "had never seen anything like it," CFK said that she had raised this with President Preval as well as talking about the need to build justice and police capacity. FM Taiana added that Argentina would like to help in these two areas. CFK said she had discussed the situation with Chilean President Bachelet and agreed fully with her observations. A/S Shannon described the U.S. assistance effort, including trade measures to help Haiti's textile industry. He noted the importance of the upcoming donors meeting, especially given food riots. CFK added that she had been shocked to see how little electricity was available and the very limited lighting in people's homes, and that she had been moved by seeing children in public building entry halls under lights reading and doing school work. A/S Shannon noted efforts underway to transform the UN peacekeeping force into a peace-building force, and Ambassador Timerman described the deep appreciation in Washington for Argentina's participation in the UN effort.

Bolivia

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16. (C) A/S Shannon stressed the importance of work to manage conflicts in the rest of the hemisphere using established institutions and norms. He described the need to find a political solution to the tensions in Bolivia and stressed that the U.S. wants to be a factor for stability in that situation. CFK said it would be a catastrophe if Bolivia were to break up, and argued that the USG can play a key role to preserve its territorial integrity. She stressed that in addition to concern about Bolivian democracy, Argentina seeks stability in that country to assure needed supplies of natural gas. She said that given the constructive role of the OAS and the Rio Group in the recent Colombia-Ecuador dispute, she was hopeful that those institutions can encourage a solution in Bolivia. Shannon agreed that the OAS could play a very important role and the U.S. would support that. CFK said that if we get through this challenge without the country breaking apart, that success could strengthen the OAS.

Colombia

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17. (C) A/S Shannon turned to Colombia, noting that Uribe has two years more in office and that we were trying to move the FTA forward, though the outcome of that effort is far from clear at this moment. He noted that Uribe's strategy of democratic security has produced tremendous results, and that Colombians are now confident of their triumph and success. He noted that Uribe's goal has been to use military force to bring the FARC to the negotiating table. FARC efforts at constructing a humanitarian accord were a tentative step toward a larger negotiation. However, lack of confidence on both sides and serious mis-steps by Hugo Chavez had ended this possibility

for  
the moment. CFK urged the USG to be more vigorous in its  
support  
of a humanitarian release of hostages. Shannon said that we  
do  
support efforts for humanitarian releases, but only in  
support of  
the GOC. CFK recounted her December 11 conversation with  
President Uribe where she found him very skeptical about the  
release of Ingrid Betancourt and others. She argued that  
FARC  
nevertheless released six hostages since and has lost two of  
its  
Secretariat members. "It is no wonder they don't want to

SIPDIS  
release  
more hostages now," she said. CFK said she admired Uribe's  
life history and conviction, but "it seems to me that a  
humanitarian exchange would be of benefit." She argued that  
Betancourt's death would be a "disaster" that would hurt  
Uribe's  
image in Europe and the U.S. and benefit the FARC. CFK said  
she  
thought support for an effort to liberate Betancourt could  
help Uribe's image and might even spark some progress in  
the broader conflict or win more releases. She added that  
she did not want to see the difficulties between Colombia  
and Ecuador or Colombia and Venezuela worsen, and a gesture  
could help ease tensions. A/S Shannon said we agree with  
the principle of a humanitarian release, but the  
involvement of President Chavez was letting the FARC think  
that they have additional leverage on the situation.  
Chavez has been too impatient in his efforts. CFK said it  
would probably take some time to reestablish contacts with  
the FARC at present, but again argued that it would be  
worth the effort for the U.S. to support a humanitarian  
release.

Venezuela  
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18. (C) A/S Shannon described his several efforts to  
reestablish a dialogue and better relations with  
Venezuela. But to date, Venezuela has not been interested.  
Shannon noted U.S. efforts to focus cooperation on stopping  
drug trafficking, but even there the GOV just wasn't  
interested. He argued that Chavez' anti-American diatribes  
were creating a firm bi-partisan consensus against him in the  
United States. CFK said that she talks to Chavez fairly  
regularly and had talked to him twice in recent days,  
including a  
discussion about his decision to nationalize an  
Argentine-owned  
steel plant (Sidor) and about the chances for a hostage  
release.  
She said she could mention U.S. efforts to reestablish  
contacts  
to him when they talked again. She said one has to accept  
the  
workings of a "Caribbean mentality" in dealing with Chavez  
and  
suggested that perhaps the United States and Venezuela could  
agree on some second-level ways to improve relations.  
Shannon  
said he knows Chavez from his service in Venezuela, and that  
he  
fears Chavez is now using his anti-Americanism as a way to  
support his popularity at home, which makes him hesitant to  
be seen to cooperate in any way. CFK said she would  
mention this topic the next time she talks with Chavez, as  
she believes it is important to lower tensions and  
eliminate polarization.

Investment Climate  
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19. (C) A/S Shannon said that in the bilateral relationship

we hoped to deepen cooperation in foreign policy, science and technology, and economic relations, especially via more economic interaction. CFK said she agreed and noted how happy she was with her meeting the day before with the CEO of U.S. pharmaceutical firm Pfizer. The CEO had promised to invest millions of dollars in research on Parkinson's disease in Argentina. Science Minister Baranao had told her that other U.S. firms are interested in doing more research and development in Argentina. She said she hoped this would include investment in the agriculture and food fields, and would happily meet with any CEO interested in investment. A/S Shannon and Ambassador Wayne said the directors of the American Chamber of Commerce were eager to engage with the GoA on how to encourage more investment and that U.S. companies like Monsanto were very interested in a new approach to working on Argentina. Alberto Fernandez said he had agreed to have a lunch soon with the Amcham to discuss these issues. CFK said she really seeks more investment and is happy to discuss with company executives what can bring that about.

110. (U) WHA A/S Thomas Shannon cleared this cable.  
WAYNE